

# A 'Trump Deal'? Juggling War, 'Easy War' and Negotiation

 Send to Kindle

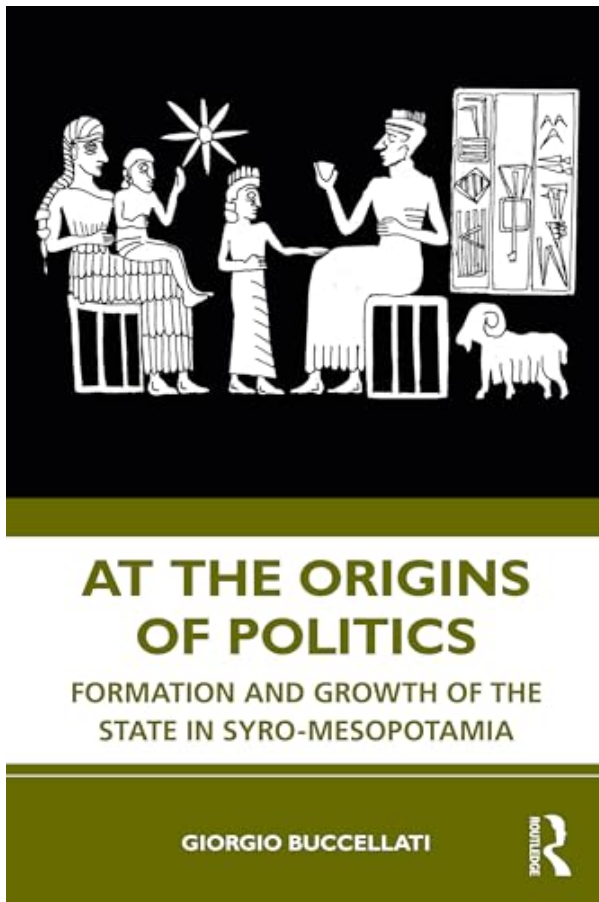
---

*The key MAGA issue is not foreign policy, but how to structurally re-balance an economic paradigm in danger of an extinction event.*

Trump clearly is in the midst of an existential conflict. He has a landslide mandate. But is ringed by a resolute domestic enemy front in the form of an 'industrial concern' infused with Deep State ideology, centred primarily on preserving U.S. global power (rather than on mending of the economy).

The key MAGA issue however is *not* foreign policy, but how to structurally re-balance an economic paradigm in danger of an extinction event. Trump has always been clear that this forms his primordial goal. His coalition of supporters are fixed on the need to revive America's industrial base, so as to provide reasonably well-paid jobs to the MAGA corps. [At the Origins of Poli...](#) Buccellati, Giorgio Best Price: \$47.49 Buy New \$39.99 (as of 11:16 UTC - Details)

Trump may for now have a mandate, but extreme danger lurks – not just the Deep State and the Israeli lobby. The Yellen *debt bomb* is the more existential threat. It threatens Trump's support in Congress, because the bomb is set to explode shortly before the 2026 midterms. New tariff revenues, DOGE savings, and even the upcoming Gulf shake-down are all centred on getting some sort of fiscal order in place, so that \$9 trillion plus of short-term debt – maturing imminently – can be rolled over to the longer term without resort to eye-watering interest rates. It is Yellen-Democrat's little trip wire for the Trump agenda.



So far, the general context seems plain enough. Yet, on the minutiae of how exactly to re-balance the economy; how to manage the ‘debt bomb’; and how far DOGE should go with its cuts, divisions in Trump’s team are present. In fact, the tariff war and the China tussle bring into contention a fresh phalanx of opposition: i.e. those (some on Wall Street, oligarchs, etc.) who have prospered mightily from the golden era of free-flowing, seemingly limitless, money-creation; those who were enriched, precisely by the policies that have made America subservient to the looming American ‘debt knell’.

Yet to make matters more complex, two of the key components to Trump’s mooted ‘re-balancing’ and debt ‘solution’ cannot be whispered, let alone said aloud: One reason is that it involves deliberately devaluing ‘the dollar in your pocket’. And secondly, many more Americans are going to lose their jobs.

That is not exactly a popular ‘sell’. Which is probably why the ‘re-balance’ has not been well explained to the public.

Trump launched the Liberation ‘Tariff Shock’ seemingly minded to crash-start a restructuring of international trade relations – as the first step towards a general re-alignment of major currency values.

China however, wasn’t buying into the tariff and trade restrictions ‘stuff’, and matters quickly escalated. It looked for a moment as if the Trump ‘Coalition’ might fracture under the pressure of the concomitant crisis in the U.S. bond market to the tariff fracas that shook confidence.

The Coalition, in fact, held; markets subsided, but then the Coalition fractured over a foreign policy issue – Trump’s hope to normalise relations with Russia, towards a Great Global Reset.

A major strand within the Trump Coalition (apart from MAGA populists) are the neocons and Israeli Firsters. Some sort of Faustian bargain supposedly was struck by Trump at the outset through a deal that had his team heavily peopled by zealous Israeli-Firsters.

Simply put, the breadth of coalition that Trump thought he needed to win the election and deliver an economic re-balance also included two foreign policy pillars: Firstly, the reset with Moscow – the pillar by which to end the ‘forever wars’, which his Populist base despised. And the second pillar being the neutering of Iran as a military power and source of resistance, on which both Israeli Firsters – and Israel – insist (and with which Trump seems wholly comfortable). Hence the Faustian pact.

Trump’s ‘peacemaker’ aspirations no doubt added to his electoral appeal, but they were not the real driver to his landslide. What has become evident is that these diverse agendas – foreign and domestic – are interlinked: A set-back in one or the other acts as a domino either impelling or retarding the other agendas. Put simply: Trump is dependent on ‘wins’ – early ‘wins’ – even if this means rushing towards a prospective ‘easy win’ without thinking through whether he possesses a sound strategy (and ability) to achieve it.

All of Trump’s three agenda objectives, it turns out, are more complicated and divisive than he perhaps expected. He and his team seem captivated by western-embedded assumptions such as first, that war generally happens ‘Over There’; that war in the post Cold War era is not actually ‘war’ in any traditional sense of full, all-out war, but is rather a limited application of overwhelming western force against an enemy incapable of threatening ‘us’ in a similar manner; and thirdly,

that a war's scope and duration is decided in Washington and its Deep State 'twin' in London.

So those who talk about ending the Ukraine war through an imposed unilateral ceasefire (ie, the faction of Walz, Rubio and Hegseth, led by Kellogg) seem to assume blithely that the terms and timing for *ending the war* also can be decided in Washington, and imposed on Moscow through the limited application of asymmetric pressures and threats.

Just as China isn't buying into the tariff and trade restriction 'stuff', neither is Putin buying into the ultimatum 'stuff': (*'Moscow has weeks, not months, to agree a ceasefire'*). Putin has patiently tried to explain to Witkoff, Trump's Envoy, that the American presumption that the scope and duration of any war is very much up to the West to decide simply doesn't gel with today's reality.

And, in companion mode, those who talk about bombing Iran (which includes Trump) seem also to assume that they can dictate the war's essential course and content too; the U.S. (and Israel perhaps), can simply determine to bomb Iran with big bunker-buster bombs. That's it! End of story. This is assumed to be a self-justifying and easy war – and that Iran must learn to accept that they brought this upon themselves by supporting the Palestinians and others who refuse Israeli normalisation.

Aurelien observes:

*“So we are dealing with limited horizons; limited imagination and limited experience. But there's one other determining factor: The U.S. system is recognised to be sprawling, conflictual – and, as a result, largely impervious to outside influence – and even to reality. Bureaucratic energy is devoted almost entirely to internal struggles, which are carried out by shifting coalitions in the administration; in Congress; in Punditland and in the media. But these struggles are, in general, about [domestic] power and influence – and not about the inherent merits of an issue, and [thus] require no actual expertise or knowledge”.*

*“The system is large and complex enough that you can make a career as an ‘Iran expert’, say, inside and outside government, without ever having visited the country or speaking the language – by simply recycling standard wisdom in a way that will attract patronage. You will be fighting battles with other supposed ‘experts’, within a very confined intellectual perimeter, where only certain conclusions are acceptable”.*

What becomes evident is that this cultural approach (the *Think-Tank Industrial Complex*) induces a laziness and the prevalence of hubris into western thinking. It is *assumed* reportedly, that Trump *assumed* that Xi Jinping would rush to meet with him, following the imposition of tariffs – to plead for a trade deal – because China is suffering some economic headwinds.

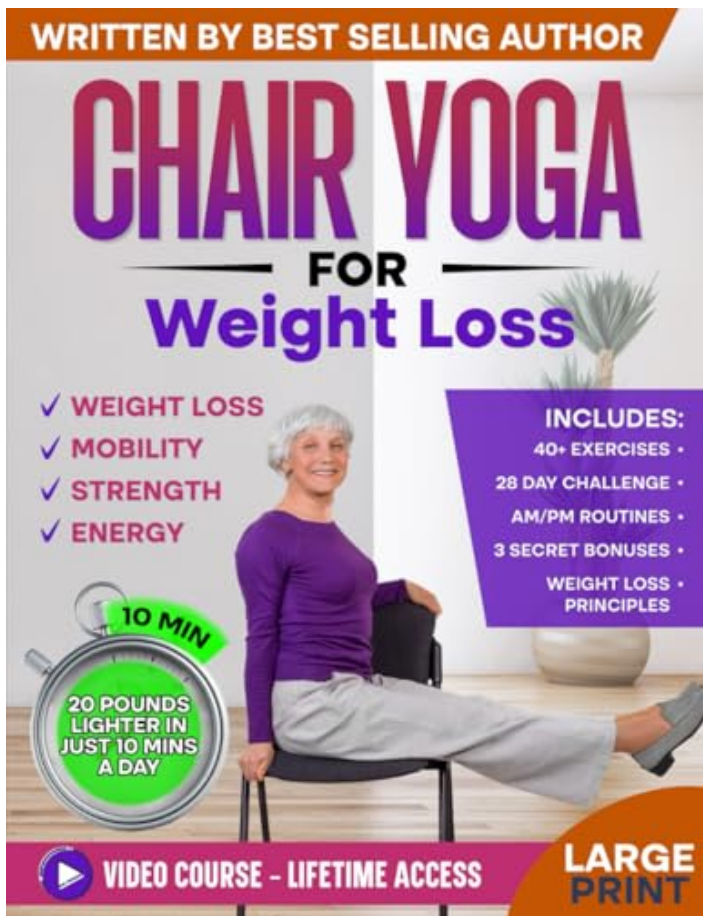
It is blandly assumed by the Kellogg contingent too that pressure is both the necessary and sufficient condition to compel Putin to agree to an unilateral ceasefire – a ceasefire that Putin repeatedly has stated he would not accept until a political framework was first agreed. When Witkoff relays Putin’s point within the Trump team discussion, he stands as a contrarian outside the ‘licensed discourse’ which insists that Russia only takes détente with an adversary seriously after it has been forced to do so by a defeat or serious setback.


Iran too repeatedly has said that it will not be stripped naked of its conventional defences; its allies and its nuclear programme. Iran likely has the capabilities to inflict huge damage both on U.S. forces in the region and on Israel.

The Trump Team is divided on strategy here too – crudely put: to Negotiate or to Bomb. Chair Yoga for Weight ... Harper, Alex Best Price: \$11.61 Buy New \$16.44 (as of 01:16 UTC - Details)

It seems that the pendulum has swung under intense pressure from Netanyahu and the Jewish institutional leadership within the U.S.

A few words can change *everything*. In an about face, Witkoff shifted from saying a day earlier that Washington would be satisfied with a cap on Iranian nuclear



 enrichment and would not require the dismantling of its nuclear facilities, to posting on his official X account that any deal would require Iran to “*stop and eliminate its nuclear enrichment and weaponization program ... A deal with Iran will only be completed if it is a Trump deal*”. Without a clear reversal on this from Trump, we are on a path to war.

It is plain that Team Trump has not thought through the risks inherent to their agendas. Their initial ‘ceasefire meeting’ with Russia in

Riyadh, for example, was a theatre of the *facile*. The meeting was held on the easy assumption that since Washington had determined to have an early ceasefire then ‘it must be’.

*“Famously”, Aurelien wearily notes, “the Clinton administration’s Bosnia policy was the product of furious power struggles between rival American NGO and Human Rights’ alumni – none of whom knew anything about the region, or had ever been there”.*

It is not just that the team is insouciant towards the possible consequences of war in the Middle East. They are captive to manipulated assumptions that it will be an easy war.

*The views of individual contributors do not necessarily represent those of the Strategic Culture Foundation.*

